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# Record

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## Growing Churches overflows Gulfshore

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

Conference planners were delighted when the Growing Churches Conference at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian on July 29-31 drew overflow participation, with some conferees having to stay in local hotels.

The conference was co-sponsored by the Discipleship and Family Ministry (DFM) and the Sunday School Departments of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). Churches from all over Mississippi and even from adjacent states came for three days of training and encouragement.

The annual conference is noted for being a "one-stop shopping" experience for busy Baptist laypeople, pastors, staff, and associational leaders. The conference provides a wide variety of tracks covering such areas as deacon ministry, children and preschool ministry, youth ministry, leadership in smaller churches, recreation, balloon art and magic, Bible drills, discipleship, Sunday School, women's ministry, and family ministry.



**BEST BALLOONS** — Conferees attending the session on Balloon Art with a Gospel Message, led by Perry Robbins, pastor of Emmanuel Church in Columbia, learn the finer points of designing balloon animals for ministry during the Growing Churches Conference at Gulfshore Assembly on July 29-31. (BR photo by Tony Martin)



**SPEAKER'S TOURNAMENT FINALIST** — Michelle Glaze of First Church, Clinton, shares her 2004 Speaker's Tournament speech with the conferees at the Growing Churches Conference at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly July 29-31 during the Thursday evening worship service. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

"The weekend is designed for all of our associational leaders in all areas of church life, as well as the leaders in local churches," said Glenn Shows, DFM consultant and coordinator of the event. "We provide conferences for just about every area, except music and a couple of others. Whether you're involved in Sunday School, deacon ministry, age-group work or discipleship, we've got something for you."

"We want people to leave here with just what they came to get," Shows continued. "We want them to see the resources that are available to them. We want them to be aware of what the convention can provide. We want people to see the visionary opportunity in several different ministries."

Marcus Peagler, director of the DFM Department, gave awards to Dale Eakes of Louin Church, Louin, as the Associational Discipleship Director of the Year; and to John Temple, pastor of First Church, Madison, as Friend of Discipleship and Family Ministry.

The praise team from Bel Aire Church provided music for the Friday night worship service, and Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the MBCB, brought the message.

Conference attendees covered a broad spectrum of both age and race. Ed and Tee Willis might be a little atypical; Ed Willis is 92 years of age. "There are a lot of handicaps that come from being 92," said Willis, "one of which is having a young wife."

"I'm part of what keeps you alive!" Tee Willis retorted. Willis was delighted at what he

received at the conference. He and his wife are involved in a church plant in Clinton — a church that is primarily African-American. The Willises are white.

"I came because I feel a need for renewal," said Willis. "I need to be challenged and be more realistic about this matter, about what the Bible says."

"There has been a high point in every session," Tee Willis said. "We're working to get this church [Birch Hill Church, Jackson] started. It's easy to get discouraged when you're small, but just because you're small doesn't mean that you can't do the same things as any other church."

"I've been attending the discipling classes," said Jim Booth, pastor of Birch Hill Church and a contract consultant in the Church Planting Department of the MBCB. "We've seen a model that will work in an apartment community with a startup church. We've found that we can set the direction rather than fight tradition."

"We've got about 22 people here," Booth continued. "It's a mixed group of Anglos and African-Americans. We wanted some of our young people to experience fellowship and have some exposure to Southern Baptists. It's helped them to see how we relate to others."

"I'm 're-encouraged' and invigorated to not only be a church planter but to plant the Scripture," Willis said. "I'm trying to memorize a verse of Scripture from every book of the Bible."

The Growing Churches Conference is funded by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. For more information, contact Shows at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Telephone: (601) 292-3284 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 373. E-mail: gshows@mbcb.org.

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# Christians under attack

No thanks to most of the main-  
stream American news media,  
positive reports continue to  
percolate to the top as the nation of Iraq  
attempts to right itself after enduring  
decades of the most heinous crimes  
imaginable against humanity. At a great  
cost of lives and treasure, the U.S. and its  
allies have managed to place the Iraqi  
people on the road to liberty; it will be  
up to them to make the most of this  
once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

There have been many setbacks to this  
point, as could be expected. The August 1  
series of coordinated bomb attacks  
against Iraqi Christians ranks  
among the most troubling of those  
setbacks. On that Sunday in Iraq,  
five churches in Baghdad and  
Mosul were rocked by powerful car  
bombs apparently designed to kill  
as many Christians as possible.

Experts believe the secondary  
purposes of the bombings were to  
sow doubt about on the new Iraqi  
government's ability to secure the  
country, and/or to drive a split  
between Christians and Muslims in  
the country. The timing and loca-  
tions of the bombings delivered an  
unmistakable message from terror-  
ists: Christians must leave or die.

Some of the churches that were  
attacked are among the most ancient  
Christian sects to be found in  
Mesopotamia — the Chaldean Church and  
the Syriac (Assyrian) Church. Tiny by  
today's global denomination standards,  
the two churches have had tumultuous  
histories over the centuries of Christianity  
but presently recognize the Pope and the  
rites of the Roman Catholic Church.

Under the regime of Sadaam Hussein,  
Christian churches in Iraq enjoyed a mea-  
sure of security as long as they didn't raise  
the ire of the mad dictator. Since his down-  
fall, however, the churches have been easy  
targets for Muslim extremists. Smaller  
bombings and individual murders of  
Christians have taken place at least since

January of this year, but  
there had been nothing  
on the scale of the  
August 1 assaults.

"We were in the Mass  
and suddenly we heard  
a big boom, and I could-  
n't feel my body any-  
more. I didn't feel any-  
thing," Marwan Saqit  
told Associated Press.

"I saw injured  
women and children  
and men, the church's  
glass shattered every-  
where. There's glass all  
over the floor," worship-  
per Juliette Agob told  
Associated Press.

"What are the  
Muslims doing? Does  
this mean that they want  
us out?" asked a deacon  
quoted by Associated  
Press. "Those people  
who commit these awful  
criminal acts have noth-  
ing to do with God.  
They will go to hell."

Iraq's Christians  
remain undaunted,  
however. "This is the  
best time. People are  
hungry for Christ; they  
need Christ now," said  
Evangelical Alliance  
Church Pastor Ghassan  
Thomas in an interview with ASSIST  
News Service.

As we Americans sit in our comfortable  
church sanctuaries this coming Sunday, anx-  
iously checking our watches as our stomachs  
growl, let us be aware of the tremendous  
price being paid by other Christians around  
the world for the privileges we take so very  
much for granted in this country.

When we consider the plight of Iraqi  
Christians and many other Christians in  
similar situations, let us pray for their  
Kingdom work as we experience a reawak-

"MA'AM, I WANT A BIBLE. I DON'T  
WANT IT REVISED OR PARAPHRASED. I DON'T  
WANT IT ANNOTATED, UPDATED, ABBREVIATED,  
ILLUSTRATED, OR NOTATED. I DON'T NEED  
CROSS-REFERENCES OR CHAIN-REFERENCES.  
I DON'T WANT IT INDUCED, DEDUCTED, OR  
CONDUCTED. I DON'T WANT IT DRAMATIZED,  
AUDIO-IZED, DEVOTIONALIZED, DISPENSATIONALIZED,  
OR ANY KIND OF IZED. I WANT A BIBLE BIBLE.  
CAN YOU HELP ME?"

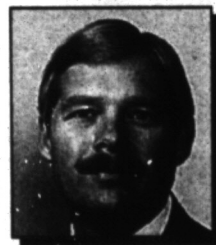


ening and new understanding of our own  
role in the Kingdom (Matthew 28:18-20).

Let us pray for the unbridled ambition  
to share with every person on earth the  
Good News of Jesus Christ. Let us pray for  
the endless courage to stand up to the Evil  
One and his earthly minions at every turn.  
Let us pray for the bottomless humility to  
acknowledge God's love for us as  
expressed by His sacrifice upon the cross.

Then let us go out and save the world.  
After what He did for us so long ago, it's  
the least we can do for Him.

## GUEST OPINION:



### What Ron didn't say

By C. Ben Mitchell, Chicago

While Ron Reagan is  
clearly not a clone of  
his father, he does support  
human cloning. At least that's  
what he told the Democratic  
National Convention June 27 in  
Boston. His allusion to cloning  
was subtle but real.

Reagan said, "Now, imagine  
going to a doctor who, instead  
of prescribing drugs, takes a  
few skin cells from your arm.  
The nucleus of one of your cells  
is placed into a donor egg  
whose own nucleus has been  
removed. A bit of chemical or  
electrical stimulation will  
encourage your cell's nucleus  
to begin dividing...."

In other words, the doctor  
would be creating a cloned  
human embryo. The stem cells  
would then be harvested at the  
cost of the death of this embryo.

Reagan's rhetoric can only  
be described as over-the-top.  
First, by not using the term  
"human cloning" he veiled  
what many Americans would  
find extremely objectionable.

Second, his speech hugely  
inflated the realities of stem cell  
research. Listening to Reagan,  
one would be led to believe  
that a cure for Parkinson's was  
around the corner. The most  
enthusiastic scientist knows

that, even if treatments or cures  
are found through embryonic  
stem cell research, they are  
many years away. Creating  
false hopes is no way to stimu-  
late good science.

Another gloss by the son of  
America's 40th president was  
the cavalier way he described  
egg donation. Take a few skin  
cells, he said, and drop them  
into a donor egg.

At first glance, this seems  
innocuous. Any woman who  
has been an egg donor will tes-  
tify that donation is not quite  
so easy. Egg donors are first  
given very powerful drugs to  
make them "super ovulate" to  
create as many eggs as possi-  
ble. These drugs are potent hor-  
mones that make many women  
feel extremely uncomfortable.  
Next, the eggs are harvested

through a small needle inserted  
into the ovary. Needle aspira-  
tion, as it is called, can cause  
permanent damage to a  
woman's ovaries and, in rare  
cases, even death.

The cost of egg donation for  
research should not be ignored.  
In a 2003 article in the proceed-  
ings of the National Academy  
of Sciences, Peter Mombaerts, a  
neuroscientist at The  
Rockefeller University,  
observed, "Optimistically —  
100 human oocytes would be  
required to generate cus-  
tomized ntES [nuclear transfer  
embryonic stem] cell lines for a  
single individual.... [H]uman  
oocytes must be harvested  
from super-ovulated volun-  
teers, who are reimbursed for  
their participation. Add to this  
the complexity of the clinical

procedure, and the cost of a  
human oocyte is [approximate-  
ly] \$1,000-2,000 in the U.S.  
Thus, to generate a set of cus-  
tomized ntES cell lines for an  
individual, the budget for the  
human oocyte material alone  
would be [approximately]  
\$100,000-200,000. This is a pro-  
hibitively high sum that will  
impede the widespread appli-  
cation of this technology in its  
present form...."

Everyone wants to see treat-  
ments and cures for Parkinson's,  
Alzheimer's, diabetes, and the  
other diseases, but the means to  
achieve the goal must be ethically  
justifiable. Human embryonic  
stem cell research simply cannot  
meet that requirement. Human  
beings should not be cloned.  
Human embryos should not be  
cannibalized for their cellular  
parts — and women and their  
ovaries should not be treated as  
egg-laying factories for experi-  
mental science.

Mitchell is a consultant on  
bioethics for the Southern Baptist  
Ethics & Religious Liberty  
Commission in Nashville and  
associate professor of bioethics and  
contemporary culture at Trinity  
Evangelical Divinity School in  
suburban Chicago.



# APA sets homosexual marriage platform

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — Family advocates were dismayed but not surprised by the American Psychological Association (APA) embrace of efforts to legalize same-sex marriage and advance homosexuals' child custody rights.

The APA reported in a July 28 news release, "Prohibiting civil marriage for same-sex couples is discriminatory and unfairly denies such couples, their children and other members of their families the legal, financial and social advantages of civil marriage." The press release was based on a resolution adopted by the group's Council of Representatives during their recent annual meeting in Hawaii.

"The APA also opposed discrimination against lesbian or gay parents adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care and reproductive health services," the group's news release added.

The report prompted Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, to note, "This is the same group that, at the command of the radical homosexual lobby, supinely took homosexuality off the list of psychological disorders decades ago. The APA does whatever the radical homosexual lobby tells it to do. It's nothing more than a professional lobbying group for the radical homosexual lobby."

Land also noted, "I don't get my moral compass from the American Psychological Association. The Bible declares same-sex marriage as an oxymoron, and at least two-thirds of the American people oppose it."

"Fortunately, we live in a representative democracy where each member of the American Psychological Association has a



vote just like every other American. I'm willing to let the wisdom of the American people, not the APA, decide this issue for American society."

The genesis of the APA's embrace of homosexuality, according to Baptist Press columnist Kelly Boggs, dates back to the 1970s. In a July 30 column, Boggs noted that the events unfolding from an onslaught of homosexual activists initially against the American Psychiatric Association and then the American Psychological Association are recounted in two reputable books:

- Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth (Baker Books, 1996) by psychiatrist Jeffery Satinover, who holds degrees from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard, the University of Texas, and Yale.

- Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis (Princeton University Press, 1987, as listed on Amazon) by Ronald Bayer, currently a professor of public health at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

Boggs writes that the American Psychiatric Association, the first of the organizations to declare homosexuality to be normal, took that stance "without a single shred of scientific evidence. Even now the jury is still out on the issue because not one study to date has shown homosexuality to be innate or irreversible..."

"Don't be surprised, or swayed, by the American Psychological Association's recent endorsement of homosexual 'marriage,'" Boggs writes. "It is just one more organization that has been co-opted by homosexual activists."

Focus on the Family founder James Dobson said in a July 29 news release that the American Psychological Association's support of same-sex unions "flies in the face of logic, science and the historical experience of every culture on the face of the planet."

"Let's be clear: What we're talking about here is intentionally creating hundreds of thousands of motherless and fatherless families, permanently depriving little boys of a father and little girls of a mother."

Glenn Stanton, Focus on the Family's senior research analyst for marriage and sexuality, echoed Dobson's concerns, noting, "This policy will subject generations of children to the status of lab animals in a vast, untested social experiment with the family. No one can say that is compassionate."

"Study after study has found that boys and girls not raised by both their mother and father are much more likely to, among other things, suffer abuse, perform poorly in school, suffer lower levels of mental and physical health and wind up in trouble with the law."

Bill Maier, a clinical psychologist and a Focus on the Family vice president, added that the psychological association's Council of Representatives has concluded that the desires of a tiny minority of the population "are more important than the best interests of America's children."

"Every responsible psychologist in the APA should be ashamed; the organization is obviously more concerned with appeasing its powerful gay lobby than it is with retaining any semblance of moral and ethical duty."

## The Baptist Record



### THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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### Bibliocipher

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MBYG SPJ MGTX ST ACET

PJY PI TNSUY, KP ES

KUBFBY FTECBXTYG

CEPXN SPJ: ITCF ST XPY.

GCNNCB YMP: IBZT

Clue: C = A

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hosea 10:4

### Baptists raided

OSLO, Norway (BP) — As increased fines and pressure on unregistered Baptists continue in Kazakhstan, some religious observers are wary of a new law designed to "combat extremist activity" in the former Soviet country. Kazakhstan law allows fines and other penalties toward religious organizations for refusal to register with the proper authorities. "The very term 'refusal to register' is not entirely clear," Roman Podoprigora, a legal studies expert specializing in religion, told Forum 18, an Internet news service focusing on persecuted Christians and other religious groups in the former Soviet Union and its satellite states. "It is virtually impossible to show that believers really do refuse to register," he said. "I personally believe that registration of a religious association is not compulsory." In April, police raided a Baptist Sunday service in northern Kazakhstan and began filming all those present with a camcorder. "They failed to respond to a request not to disrupt the service and to stop filming," local Baptists told Forum 18. "They started pushing believers away when they tried to stop them from filming. ... Then they brought witnesses into the room and drew up a document stating that a meeting had been held unlawfully." A new draft law in Kazakhstan goes beyond refusal to register and addresses the issue of extremism. The draft allows the state to conduct studies of the activity of religious groups and of "foreign citizens who engage in preaching and/or preaching any form of religious doctrine by means of religious educational activity." The state may then recommend banning the activity of such organizations that are deemed in violation of the extremism law. Furthermore, the draft law states that any religious organization that is considered extremist in another country will be considered extremist in the country of Kazakhstan.

### Looking back

#### 10 years ago

Howell W. Todd moves into the president's office at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton. He states, "Starting the new school year is exciting for me personally and I know it is an exciting time for the new collegians who will be coming in."

#### 20 years ago

Jasper County native Amy Ishee, age 10, wins the European Baptist Convention's Bible Drill competition in Interlaken, Switzerland, while her father serves a military tour of duty in West Germany.

#### 50 years ago

Parents generally do not share the concerns of churchmen, educators, and psychologists over the possible ill effects of extensive television watching, according to a study by the National Council of Churches and Yale Divinity School.



## FASTING

Fasting is not an issue that most of us have on the front burner of our hearts. In our world of obesity and eat until you "pop or drop" we rarely think about fasting. Webster's defines fasting as "the art of abstaining from food, especially for an unusual time and often as a form of religious observance."

That is an okay definition but the Bible has a great deal more to say about fasting than that and the practice of fasting is something that all of us might wish to consider and understand the benefits that could be derived from it. Let me say quickly that I recognize and we all should be aware that there are health considerations that would prevent some people from even thinking about fasting from food. It would be unwise and even dangerous to do so. On the other hand there are times and ways in which many of us might be blessed by a fast.

In a practical way I have observed that there are basically three ways in which fasting occurs. One is **intentional**, one is **unintentional**, and the third one is **imposed**.

**Intentional** fast is when someone simply decides that they are going to focus on staying away from eating for a period of time and give their attention to other issues or simply focus on the Lord.

The **unintentional** fast takes place simply because there are things that have arisen to such a position in your life that you simply ignore or forget about eating for a period of time. Grief experiences can create that in a person.

The **imposed** fast takes place when somebody simply declares that everybody in a group or a church join in a period of fasting. Usually that kind of fast seems to be the least productive or the least meaningful.

Let me address this topic from a personal and private

way to encourage you and me to consider what the benefits would be when we carry out physical fasting.

First, it is important to realize that **fasting is not just to eliminate but to elevate**. Just to hear the word fasting causes many of us to think about what we would have to do without, but from a biblical standpoint it is important to see that we should fill our lives with other things that become more significant to elevate the other desires and other hungers of our heart to a new level.

Food dominates the thinking of so many people. When am I going to eat next and what am I going to eat? We have hardly crammed the last bite into our mouths from breakfast before we are wondering what the noon meal will hold for us. That is sad!

Think about this in a broader context. Maybe there are times you should elevate other hungers over some of the things you fill your life with beyond just food.

Sometime ago I heard Lee Royce, the president of Mississippi College in Clinton, talking about taking a "news fast." As he talked about it I began to realize it is true. I can do without hearing all of the news and the news goes on without me. In reality most of what I hear on the news doesn't particularly help, encourage, bless, or enrich my life. I could be like maybe some of you and become simply a news junkie.



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

In our world with so many different news outlets grinding out information 24 hours a day, we can just live taking in from one moment to the next the latest bombing here or there, or the sentencing of some celebrity, or the five minute ticker from the Dow Jones. What would happen if you weren't watching it? Life would go on and you would miss very little.

Here is the point: Instead of just eating and drinking in the news, what if you substituted Bible reading, meditation, and prayer?

Throughout the day you would begin to realize how many minutes, possibly hours, you spend listening to the news on the radio, watching it on television, or reading it in the newspaper. How much better would your life be if you filled all that time with a walk with God, a talk with Him, or even reading godly or encouraging material?

Instead of being hungry for all of those things that may slightly benefit you, elevate those hungers that if fed, would strengthen you in soul, spirit, mind, and purpose.

Secondly, I would point out that **fasting is not just to punish but to prioritize**. The Hebrew word that is translated "fast" in Scripture literally means to "afflict the soul or to afflict self."

The Greek word used in the New Testament is related to self-denial, but fasting is not just to hurt you or to punish your body.

It is for you to prioritize the truly lasting things in life and eternal things of value.

You may be fasting and seeking the Lord as you are trying to make a critical decision in life or maybe you are facing a dilemma like Hannah when she was so burdened and fasting because she was childless.

It could be that you are distraught with grief over the loss of someone or something in your life. Those are the times to prioritize and refocus attention on what is truly meaningful and the One who is truly powerful.

Sometimes in the Bible this dimension of fasting had to do with self punishment and became a spiritual mark that you were a dedicated, religious person. Jesus changed that and said if you are going to fast, don't go around announcing it to everybody.

Don't go around looking down in the dumps and give the appearance that you are so sold out to God that you have to look dismal all the time. No, He said brighten up your life and do not give an appearance as though you are fasting for the real point of

the fast is not just to punish yourself but to find the glorious and delightful priorities of life in the Lord.

A final thought about **fasting is that it is not just an action to say, "No," but an action and opportunity to "grow."**

Whatever brings you to a fast whether it is intentional, unintentional, or even imposed, it can be a growing experience. It can even be a block of time, a day, three days, or maybe longer where literally you so reorder your life not to let the lesser hungers control every moment and every decision that the real hunger of God that the real thirst for His will and His word in your life can be anchored by a revolutionary transitional time of genuine, Bible oriented fasting.

Apart from medical hindrances, for most of us a fast would be good. For most of us to fast a day would not cause us to dry up and be blown away by the wind at night, but it could bring us to a place before God where we would find the wind of God blowing upon us to bless, use, enrich, and encourage us.

Far beyond my thoughts or my encouragement to you, talk to God and let Him guide you in the fast that may bless your heart and make a difference in your life.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).

## January Bible Study Preview Clinics

### "Hope When Believers Struggle: Studies in the Gospel of Mark"

#### September 20

- ☐ Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain - Thad Moore
- ☐ BSU, Delta State University, Cleveland - Ivan Parke
- ☐ FBC, Biloxi - Eugene Dobbs

#### September 21

- ☐ BSU, Northwest Mississippi Community College, Senatobia - Ivan Parke
- ☐ Camp Garaywa, Clinton - Thad Moore
- ☐ William Carey College, Hattiesburg - Eugene Dobbs

#### September 23

- ☐ Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville - Thad Moore
- ☐ Lauderdale Association Office, Marion - Ivan Parke
- ☐ Pike Association Office, McComb - Eugene Dobbs

Registration begins at 9 a.m. • Conference 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Cost: \$10 per person, which includes lunch and copy of Shepherd's Notes on the Book of Mark. Make all checks payable to: Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Please check the session you plan to attend and mail to: Sunday School Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. If you have further questions, please call 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3292 or by email at [jellis@mbcb.org](mailto:jellis@mbcb.org).

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

August 5, 2004

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

## SINGLES Missions Lab

**24 Hour  
Extreme  
Makeover**

- hands-on ministry
- testimonies
- fellowship
- worship
- celebrations

**September 24-25, 2004  
Camp Garaywa, Clinton**

**Registrations must be postmarked by September 8, 2004.** Refunds will not be available after that time, but substitutions may be made. For information, please contact Tammy Anderson at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 323, or [tanderson@mbcb.org](mailto:tanderson@mbcb.org), or download a registration form at [www.mbcb.org](http://www.mbcb.org).



**Servanthood:  
Love in Action**

I JOHN 3:18

## Men's Ministry State Leadership Training

**August 13-14**

**Central Hills Baptist Retreat • Kosciusko**

**Friday, August 13**

6:00 p.m. Registration  
6:30 p.m. Supper  
7:30 p.m. Opening Session  
Speaker: John Temple,  
pastor, FBC, Madison  
8:30 p.m. Training Session #1

**Saturday, August 14**

7:00 a.m. Breakfast  
8:00 a.m. Training Session #2  
9:30 a.m. Training Session #3  
11:00 a.m. Closing Session  
Speaker: Rob Carr,  
NAMB

*Cost: \$25 per person, which includes meals, lodging and all sessions. Each participant should bring linens, sleeping bag and pillow.*

### Training Sessions

- Building an Effective Men's Ministry
- Enhancing Your RA Program
- Developing Family Mission Trips
- Disaster Relief
- Ministering in Other Cultures
- New Ideas for Reaching Men
- Developing a "Challengers" Program
- Generations in Conflict
- Camp Craft Training

For more information, contact the Men's Ministry Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3334.

## Mississippi WMU CHURCH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

August 20-21, Camp Garaywa

Registration begins Friday at 3 p.m. with dinner and introductions at 5 p.m. Worship and lunch will conclude the training Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

**Preregistration is required for meals and lodging only: the cost of the conference is free.**

**Preregistration for meals and lodging MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN AUGUST 11.**

*This event is sponsored by Mississippi WMU, an auxiliary to and a department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. For more information, contact Tammy Anderson at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 323, or 601-292-3323 or download a registration form at [www.mbcb.org](http://www.mbcb.org).*



**One Voice in Concert**  
Sunday, August 8  
Alta Woods BC, Jackson

## Professional Certification for Ministry Assistants and Ministry Office SkillShops

**2004**

Sarah Farmer  
MINISTRY OFFICE SKILL SHOPS

Sandy Sigmon  
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

**September 14-16  
Camp Garaywa, Clinton**

For more info, call the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at 601-292-3305



www.trialsusa.com



## LITTLE STURGIS MOTORCYCLE RALLY OUTREACH Sturgis, Miss. - August 20-21, 2004

The Evangelism Dept., MBCB, and Sturgis Baptist Church will sponsor an **EVANGELISM OUTREACH** to bikers attending the Little Sturgis Rally. Bikers from across the USA will be coming to Mississippi for this rally. **HOPE FOR THE HIGHWAY NEW TESTAMENTS AND SPECIAL TRACTS WILL BE GIVEN TO BIKERS.**

"Team Extreme Trials" will be held in the parking lot of Sturgis Baptist Church. Four performances a day by Tommi Ahvala, a world champion in Motorcycle Trials. For a Rally Schedule log-on [www.sturgismsrally.com](http://www.sturgismsrally.com).

For additional information, call Sonny Adkins, Evangelism Dept., MBCB, 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3278.

## Rankin Assoc. Baptist Family Gathering

Sunday, August 15, 2004  
Pinelake Baptist Church, Brandon  
MAIN PROGRAM (6 p.m.)

RICK OUSLEY  
Speaker

BONUS (at 4:45 p.m.)  
Tom Lee

GRAHAM SMITH  
Music

Basics of Sunday School  
Outreach

• Powerful Preaching • Mass Choir • Discipleship Features

Youth Rally

Guest Musician: Will Reedy

Sunday, August 15, 6:00 p.m.

Pinelake Baptist Church

Brandon

## Rankin Baptist Association Children's Discipleship Rally

Daron  
Pitts  
ROC  
Ministries



Sunday  
August 15  
6 p.m.  
Liberty BC

## Mississippi Baptist Ministers' Wives Conference



### OUR GUEST SPEAKER

*Gaye Martin*

October 25, 2004

First Baptist Church, Jackson  
(Fifth Floor)

1:15 to 4:45 p.m.

For more info:

Contact the Pastor/Leadership  
Development Department

Phone: 800.748.1651. ext.305  
or 601.292.3305

E-mail: [kmcdonnell@mbcb.org](mailto:kmcdonnell@mbcb.org)

## Senior Adult Rallies

### • Monday, August 30

Associational Family Life Center, Collins

### • Tuesday, August 31

Alta Woods Baptist Church, Jackson

### • Thursday, September 2

First Baptist Church, Starkville

All rallies: 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Speaker Scotty Shows, Cordova, Tenn.

### Conferences:

"Marriage in Senior Years"

Scotty Shows

"Fun Time with Professor Corn Pone"

Joseph Harris, Laurel

"Leadership Survival Tools"

Farley Earnest, Brandon

For info: Glenn Shows, 601-292-3373, [gshows@mbcb.org](mailto:gshows@mbcb.org)

## Annual Missions Celebration

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada  
October 8-9, 2004



Kay  
Cassibry

Mississippi  
WMU's

final 125th anniversary  
celebration

*Faithful - Forward*

Contemplate God's Greatness  
Consider God's Plan  
Commit Our Best



Jim  
Futral



Betty  
Davis



Wanda  
Lee



HEART OF A

2004  
PRESCHOOL/  
CHILDREN'S  
CHOIR LEADERSHIP  
TRAINING

## SCHEDULED PLACES & DATES

**Saturday, August 7**  
**FBC, Brandon**  
Registration: 8:30-9:00 a.m.  
Conference  
9:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

**Saturday, August 7**  
**Calvary BC, Tupelo**  
Registration: 8:30-9:00 a.m.  
Conference:  
9:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

**Saturday, August 14**  
**FBC, Hattiesburg**  
Registration: 8:30-9:00 a.m.  
Conference  
9:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Coming soon for  
all your teachers  
and workers

*Teaching Children*



*Impacting Families*

First Baptist Church  
Biloxi, Miss.  
November 5 & 6, 2004

**2004 Missions**  
**Study Clinic**

"Who is willing to consecrate himself  
to the Lord?" 1 Chronicles 29:5b

## JANUARY BIBLE STUDY PREVIEW CLINICS

## "Hope When Believers Struggle: Studies in the Gospel of Mark"

### Leading the studies this year are:



**Ivan Parke**  
Assistant Professor of  
Christian Studies and  
Philosophy, Mississippi  
College, Clinton  
(Delta State; NWMSCC;  
Lauderdale Association)

**Eugene Dobbs**  
Retired Associate  
Executive Director, MBCB  
Church Ministries Consultant,  
Philadelphia  
(FBC, Biloxi; William Carey;  
Pike Association)



**Thad Moore**  
Pastor, Poplar Springs  
Drive Baptist Church,  
Meridian  
(Blue Mountain; Garaywa;  
Lake Tiak O'Khata)

### September 20, 2004

- Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain
- BSU, Delta State University, Cleveland
- FBC, Biloxi

### September 21, 2004

- BSU, Northwest Mississippi Community College, Senatobia
- Camp Garaywa, Clinton
- William Carey College, Hattiesburg

### September 23, 2004

- Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville
- Lauderdale Association Office, Marion
- Pike Association Office, McComb

Registration begins  
at 9 a.m.

Conference  
9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

# DISCIPLESHIP CELEBRATION

Pastor, bring your discipleship leaders and staff for free help in planning this year's discipleship for preschoolers, children, youth and adults in your church. Since this is an hour of personalized consultation you will need to make a definite appointment with the host association.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	PHONE
Monday, August 16	1-5 p.m. & 6:30-8:30 p.m.	FBC, Batesville	662-563-7439*
Tuesday, August 17	1-5 p.m. & 6:30-8:30 p.m.	East Heights BC, Tupelo	662-566-1700*
Thursday, August 19	1-5 p.m. & 6:30-8:30 p.m.	FBC, Madison	601-362-8676*
Monday, August 23	1-5 p.m. & 6:30-8:30 p.m.	FBC, Laurel	601-649-8114*
Tuesday, August 24	1-5 p.m. & 6:30-8:30 p.m.	FBC, Brookhaven	601-833-8111*

**\*Use the host association's phone numbers provided to make your appointment.**



# Pray this day for...

August 5-19, 2004

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone (601) 292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"To be little with God in prayer is to be little with God in service. Much secret prayer means much public service."

- "The Kneeling Christian" by an unknown Christian

For: (1) Preschool Children's Leadership Clinic, Calvary BC, Tupelo; FBC Brandon; 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (CM); (2) Pray for the 4.1 million Muslims and the 2.5 million Buddhists that live in the U.S. to be influenced by Christians.

For: (1) Language Missions Day (WMU Emphasis); (2) A growing number of young people are gambling, and millions are becoming addicted. Studies in the U.S. and Canada reveal that between 9% and 14.2% of adolescents are experiencing some symptoms of problem gambling. Pray that they can be helped.

John Ridley of New Albany, Ind., is the director of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at Indiana University Southeast, known as the Christian Student Fellowship. Pray that God would give students a desire to know Him intimately and share Jesus with others.

Much prayer is needed for an Asian woman to have strength and courage to stand against satanic forces and family pressures trying to keep her from the complete commitment to Jesus she is desiring to make. Please pray earnestly for her.

Everyone loves a good game of football (soccer). In Yemen, this is no exception. A young man is in the planning stages of developing a program for young boys. Pray that this endeavor will be a success and that it will help these young men care about physical needs as well as spiritual ones.

For: (1) Children's Bible Drill Camp, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, 2 p.m., 5th-noon, 7th (D&FM); (2) Campers on Mission Rally, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, 7 p.m., 5th-9:30 a.m., 8th (MM); (3) The divorce rate in the Bible Belt is 50% higher than the nation as a whole. Pray that this will change.

For: (1) Growing Churches Through Sunday School and Discipleship & Family Ministry, Lake Tiah O'Khata & FBC, Louisville, 7 pm, 6th-noon, 7th (S-D&FM); (2) Pray for Arabic speaking believers to continue to be raised up all across the Arab world. Pray that they will invest themselves in serving Christ in Iraq.

For: (1) Preschool/Children's Leadership Clinic, FBC, Hattiesburg, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (CM); (2) Richard Alford is the director of missions in Montgomery, Ala. Pray for two Hispanic missionary positions in two groups of associations. Pray for pastoral leaders for Hispanic, Chinese, and Thai congregations. Pray for a Korean church planter.

During the last two months, the Jeju Island Team of South Korea has shared the Good News with a number of fishermen, cabbage harvesters, and onion harvesters. As they maintain a relationship with those people, pray for the Holy Spirit to direct team members as they encourage them to commit themselves to Christ and become faithful followers.

For: (1) Discipleship Celebration, FBC, Batesville, 6-8 p.m. (D&FM); (2) Please pray for Prime Minister Sabab al-Ahmad al-Fayez al-Sabaah of Kuwait (Middle East, between Iraq and Saudi Arabia).

For: (1) Discipleship Celebration, East Heights BC, Tupelo, 6-8 p.m. (D&FM); (2) Continue to lift up D, a national pastor, and the work he is doing in Burundi. In the last few weeks, D was able to bring several of his university students to Kenya for a workshop. Pray that these students will take what they learned back to their fellow students.

One of the key community leaders in the city of Santiago, Dominican Republic, welcomed our missionaries and invited them to hold a Bible study at his home in June. He even asked them to invite as many people as possible. Please pray that the whole family will come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

For: (1) New Staff Day, FBC, Jackson, Baptist Building; 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (CG); (2) For: (1) Men's Ministry State Leadership Training for Churches, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, 6:30 a.m.-1:30-noon, 14th (MM); (2) Please pray today for Emperor Akihito of Japan.

"Fort Apache" is the nickname for a section of Buenos Aires where even the police don't like to go due to the high crime rate within. Pray for the leaders of the small church located on the edge of that community as they find ways to minister to the people who live there and attempt to break some of the barriers that exist.

## Special Ministries Retreat

September 10-11, 2004  
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

For Exceptional persons (12 yrs. and older), their pastors/ministers, parents, teachers and friends.

There will be games, Bible study, singing and lots of fun for all participants. The theme is "Rickshaw Rally - Racing to the Son"

Registration begins 3 p.m., September 10. The retreat concludes at 1 p.m., September 11. Cost is \$35 and includes overnight lodging and three meals. Please bring one adult counselor for every five campers.



## Encourage a MK with a birthday card!

10-4-90  
MR. MICAH S. McCALL  
Parents: Dennis & Margaret  
Agriculture, Eastern Africa

10-4-90  
MISS ANNE MARIE PEVEY  
Parents: Frank & Jerry Anne  
Strategy Associate, Eastern Africa

10-5-96  
MISS CARLEY L. MULLINS  
Parents: Frank & Lynn  
Church Planting, Western Europe

10-7-97  
MISS ARIANNA L. HATHCOCK  
Parents: Kenneth & Kimberly  
Student Evangelism  
Central & Eastern Europe

10-8-97  
MISS CATHERINE A. HODGINS  
Parents: Raymond & Cynthia  
Sports Evangelism  
Eastern South America

10-8-90  
MISS MELISSA K. SHEARER  
Parents: Kevin & Pamela  
Strategy, Western South America

10-14-83  
MISS VICTORIA L. HARRISON  
Parents: Frank & Phoebe  
Church Planting, Middle America

10-27-83  
MISS HANNAH GRAY JONES  
Parents: Tony & Karen  
Church Planting  
Eastern South America

10-28-88  
MISS CHELSEA L. FUNDERBURK  
Parents: Rickey & Lori  
Administrative Associates  
West Africa

10-29-85  
MR. TRAVIS M. RACEY  
Parents: Michael & Annette  
General Evangelism  
Western South America

### PLEASE NOTE

Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to Stewardship.

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name and parent's name  
MBCB Stewardship Dept.  
PO Box 530  
Jackson, MS 39205

## VOLUNTEER CHAPLAINS' TRAINING

"Chaplains Making a Difference"

September 17, 2004 • 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$5, lunch provided • Baptist Building, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson



**Morning Session**  
Child Abuse

**Afternoon Sessions**  
Domestic Violence Awareness  
Religious Issues in Family Violence

To register, call Elaine Smith, MBCB Evangelism Department,  
at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3278.

# HOUSE TOPS



## JUST FOR THE RECORD

**First Church, Eupora**, will hold a 40th anniversary celebration for William S. Stewart, pastor, and his wife as servants of the Lord August 15 at the 11 a.m. service. A reception will be held from 2-4 p.m.

**Cedar View Church, Olive Branch**, will hold a community sing August 21 at 6 p.m. Jerry Stone from West Virginia is the featured musician.



William & Bettye Stewart

Call (662) 895-2661 for more information.

**Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle**, will hold a gospel sing featuring The Professors and Grateful Hearts August 7 at 7 p.m. A hamburger meal will be held at 6 p.m. for \$5. All meal money and offering will go to the building fund. For more information,

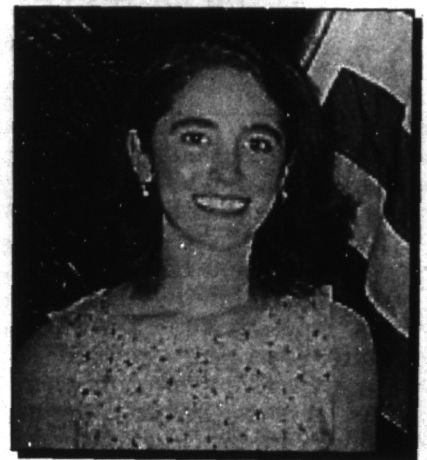
call (601) 582-9428, (601) 583-6270, or (601) 583-2106. Keith Thompson is pastor. The public is invited.

**Benton Church, Benton**, will hold its senior adult luncheon, the By His Grace Fellowship, on August 17 at 11:30 a.m. Stan Cheatham, Center Terrace Church, Canton, will be speaking. Call (662) 673-9708 for information. Charles Moore is pastor.

**Kimberly Cole** has been selected by the National WMU to participate in a mission trip to the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece. She will serve August 10-22 in a group of former National Acteen Panelists.

Cole is a member of Twin Lakes Church, Madison. She attends Minnesota State University-Moorhead.

**Time Out for Women, Celebrating 10 Years of God's Faithfulness**, will be held August 13-14 at First Church, Holly Springs. The conference begins at 6 p.m. Friday and concludes at noon Saturday. To register, send name, address, and \$20 to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 428, Holly Springs, MS 38635. For more information, call (662) 252-2627.



Kimberly Cole

## HOMEcomings AND REVIVALS

**Sylvarena, Wesson:** Homecoming September 12; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch at noon; Donny Paign, former pastor, guest speaker; Sylvarena Choir and Clay Whittington, music; Stuart Givens, Pastor.

**Crossroads, Decatur:** Homecoming and Revival August 8-13; Sunday, a potluck lunch will be served at noon with Southern Heritage, Philadelphia, as afternoon entertainment; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Mack Mason, Pascagoula, guest speaker; Scott Engle, pastor.

**Lemoyne, Biloxi:** Youth Revival August 13-15; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, all services;

David Theriot, evangelist; Broken Vessels, worship band; all are invited; Bill Renick, pastor; Brian Manuel, youth pastor; for more information, call (228) 326-7018.

**New Home, Smith County:** Homecoming August 8; lunch at noon; Scott Walters, speaker; The Mercy River Quartet, singers; a collection will be taken for the cemetery fund.

**Old Hebron, Newhebron:** Revival August 15-18; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gene Douglas, McComb, evangelist; Bill Herman, music; Jon Haines, pastor.

**North Columbia, Columbia:** Homecoming and 66th Anniversary August 15; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; lunch will follow; afternoon service, 2 p.m.; Carl Barnes, preaching; Monroe McManus, music; Mike Grenn, pastor. For more information call (601) 736-8635.

**Shiloh, Sontag:** Revival August 8-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Gene Douglas, preaching; Larry Romack, music.

**Gulfport Heights, Gulfport:** 50th Anniversary August 15; doughnut fellowship, 10 a.m.; former pastors recognition, 10:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; lunch at noon; afternoon service, 2 p.m.; J.W. Hall, preaching; for more

information, call (228) 863-6571; Daniel Gunter, pastor.

**Calvary, Canton:** Revival August 8-11; Sunday, 10:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Cliff Shipp, Jackson, guest speaker; Jimmie McCaleb, MBCB, music; Tom Rayburn, pastor.

**Weir, Weir:** Revival August 15-18; Sun.-Wed. 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. with covered dish following each morning service. C.C. Richie, Jr., evangelist; Diane Atkinson, music; Jim Pender, pastor.

**Highland Church, Crystal Springs:** Revival August 8-11; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Crowe, pastor, Strong Hope, Copiah Assn., evangelist; Steve Bufkin, music/education minister, Griffith Memorial, Jackson, music for the week

and messages on Sunday. David Patterson, pastor.

**Mt. Zion, Independence:** Revival September 12-15; Sunday, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, MBCB, evangelist; Randy Wood, First, Verona, music; nursery provided; Martin Hayden, pastor.

**Double Springs Church, Maben:** Revival August 8-13; Sunday, 7 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Lynn Rodrigue, evangelist; Terry Veazey and Julie McCool, music; John S. Foles, pastor.

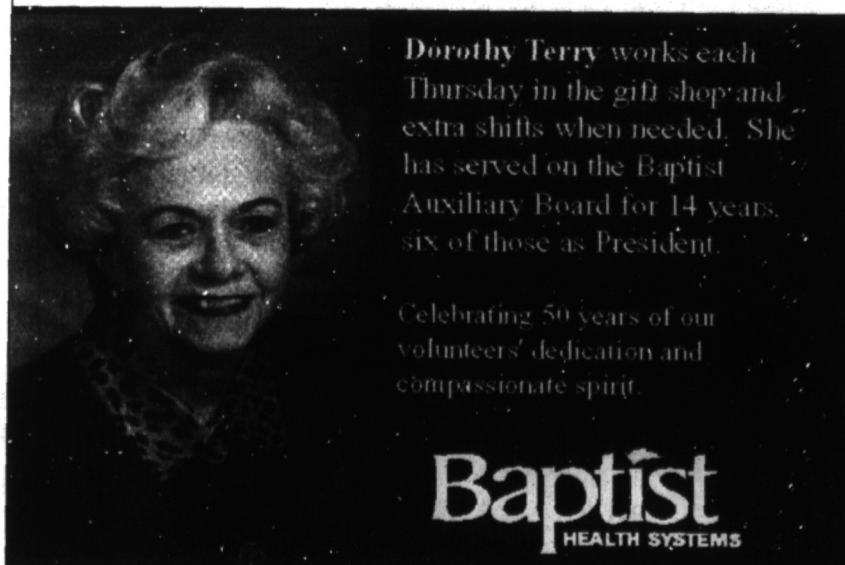
**Valley Park, Valley Park:** Revival August 8-13; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; 7 p.m. nightly; Cary Kimbrell, Bethlehem, Laurel, preaching; Keith Davis, Bethlehem, Laurel, music; Michael Ensign, pastor.

## What Difference will you Make?

No one else has your life experiences, skills or personality. No one else can help Baptist's patients and visitors exactly like you.

How will you make a difference? Volunteer Services offers the opportunity to help people in need of comfort.

Become a volunteer. Call Baptist Volunteer Services at 601-968-1210.



Dorothy Terry works each Thursday in the gift shop and extra shifts when needed. She has served on the Baptist Auxiliary Board for 14 years, six of those as President.

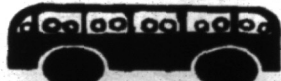
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# FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

## Live Confidently

1 Peter 1:1-12

By Mo Baker

Have you ever suffered from a collapse of confidence? Such a phenomenon occurs frequently in athletics, as even the best batters experience a hitting slump, quarterbacks throw interceptions, and basketball players endure a scoring drought. In order to restore their confidence, athletes are coached to continue working on the fundamentals, and they will eventually succeed.

God's people are not exempt from confidence failures. Living in a fallen world is enough to produce doubt and fear within the life of any believer. The audience to whom Peter wrote his first epistle experienced a struggle with living confidently in the face of persecution. Peter's message offered them hope for experiencing victory during the trials of life. Christians today can also apply Peter's teachings to their

lives during any challenging situation. Let's look into the certainties Peter described that enable Christians to enjoy living confidently.

### I. CHRISTIANS BENEFIT FROM A DIVINE INITIATIVE (1 PE 1:1-2).

Peter's introduction was meant to encourage the readers by identifying God's redemptive work in their lives. As "elect strangers," their status before God did not depend on their accomplishing worldly gain, but on God's sovereign choice. Peter emphasizes the activity of God through the ideas of foreknowledge, sanctification, and cleansing. Foreknowledge not only refers to God's knowing who would respond to His offer of salvation in Jesus Christ, but also to God's determining the exact point in history that Christ would come. The concept of sanctification com-

municates that the Holy Spirit continually enables believers to grow in personal holiness. Peter's statement, "for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood," addresses the concept of a new covenant relationship established by Jesus.

Baker

### II. CHRISTIANS ENJOY A LIVING HOPE (1 PE 1:3-5).

Peter begins this section with an expression of praise to God for salvation that sets the tone for the rest of the passage. Next, Peter lists the reasons which allow Christians to maintain confidence despite unfavorable circumstances. Because of his "great mercy" God gives believers a "new birth," resulting in new life. God also nurtures a "living hope" in believers, in contrast to one that is empty and vain. As believers face any difficulty, they can be confident that a glorious resurrection awaits them. Moreover, believers own an incorruptible inheritance that is reserved by God. Believers can be certain of these blessings because of the power of God.

### III. CHRISTIANS POSSESS AN INEXPRESSIBLE JOY (1 PE 1:6-9).

Peter's audience was beginning to face intense persecution. Despite their suffering, Peter reminded them that their trials would be brief compared to the eternal reward awaiting them. One of the paradoxes of Christianity is that although believers may endure hardships, they can rejoice because trials validate the authenticity of their faith and lead them to godliness. If through suffering a believer's faith is proven to be real, he will receive "praise, glory and honor" when Jesus returns. True believers will continue in their faith, trusting in God during life's challenges. Even though believers have never seen Jesus, they maintain a growing love for Him. Although suffering is real for Christians, believers now enjoy salvation and in eternity will experience it fully at the revelation of Jesus Christ (Schreiner 2003, 70). The outcome of our faith and faithfulness is eternal salvation, enabling us to be with Jesus forever!

### IV. CHRISTIANS ARE BLESSED WITH THE REVEALED GOSPEL (1 PE 1:10-12).

Believers in Jesus Christ represent the fulfillment of prophecy. Old Testament prophets were careful to investigate fully the salvation about which they prophesied, although they only observed it from a distance. They had a predictive ministry but did not live during its fulfillment. Peter's readers, however, were privileged to live during the time of the fulfillment of these prophecies. Contemporary Christians should be reminded of how blessed we are to have the gospel message as revealed through Scripture, because it provides us with a clearer understanding of God's plan of redemption that neither the Old Testament prophets nor heavenly angels ever experienced.

The blessings Peter identifies for believers are numerous. God has taken the initiative to equip us with all that is needed to live confidently for Him here on earth while we faithfully await the glories of heaven.

Baker is BSU Director at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## Trusting in God

2 Kings 18-19

By Mary Carraway

Soon after the deportation of the Northern Kingdom, a new king came to the throne of the Southern Kingdom. No other king of Judah was given higher praise than Hezekiah who "trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel." He began his reign by bringing sweeping religious reform. The temple was repaired and reopened, places of idol worship were destroyed, and the bronze snake of Moses was broken into pieces. A detailed description of all Hezekiah did to restore godly worship in Judah can be found in 2 Chronicles 29-31. The fact that his encounter with Sennacherib and the events of his reign is the only narrative occurring three times in the Old Testament attests to the special significance of this godly king.

### ANNOUNCE TRUST (2 KINGS 18:30)

Assyria was the dominant military power during the eighth century B.C. Under Ahaz, Judah had become a vassal of this superpower. Taking advantage of Sennacherib's ascent to the throne of Assyria, Hezekiah withheld the usual tribute. In time, Sennacherib stormed into Judah to punish the rebellious Hezekiah and took all of Judah's fortified cities except Jerusalem. Sennacherib claimed to have Hezekiah "shut up like a bird in a cage." Hezekiah weakened momentarily in his faith, apologized to the king of Assyria, and paid him 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. He even went so far as to strip gold from the doors and doorposts of the temple.

Sennacherib accepted the ransom, but he did not leave Judah. He sent a large army against



Carraway

Jerusalem under three Assyrian officials demanding Hezekiah's unconditional surrender. The arrogant speech by the field commander was designed to intimidate Hezekiah. This type of propaganda was a common Assyrian tactic to destroy the confidence of the people. The boastful

commander threatened them with siege, suffering, and famine, asserting that they could not succeed under their own strength, or even with the help of their God. He further tried to demoralize the people by urging them not to believe Hezekiah's promise that the Lord "will deliver us!" Undoubtedly Hezekiah had made this public declaration of trust in the Lord.

### ADMIT WEAKNESS (2 KINGS 19:1-3)

When Hezekiah's three intermediaries told the king what had been said, he humbled himself (wearing sackcloth, not kingly robes), sought the presence of the Lord in the temple, and called for

the Lord's prophet. Admitting his own frailty, Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah that it was a day of "distress, rebuke, and disgrace." His distress was not caused by the imminent attack of the Assyrians, but by the "rebuke" of God because of their sin. Using the analogy of a child trying to be born but without the strength to do so, he confessed his own inability to deal with the pending disaster. If we are to allow God to deliver us from undeliverable situations, we must first admit our own weakness. When we can't, He can!

### ASK FOR GOD'S HELP (2 KINGS 19:5-7, 14-19)

Isaiah responded with a message of hope from God. "Do not be afraid." God would cause Sennacherib to return home when he heard a rumor that king of Egypt was marching to fight him.

Instead of invading Judah, Sennacherib sent the king a defiant letter making one last demand for surrender. He boasted that no gods could keep the army of Assyria from destroying Jerusalem. Hezekiah again

turned to the Lord, spread the letter before Him, and prayed. In one of the finest prayers in Scripture, he addressed God as the one true God who created and reigned over heaven and earth. His reference to the mercy seat recalled the covenant between God and Israel. The objective of this prayer was God's glory, not Hezekiah's survival. The Lord's assurance of deliverance came to Hezekiah through the poetic words of Isaiah.

That night 185,000 men in the Assyrian were put to death by the angel of the Lord. Recognizing the supernatural quality of this event, Sennacherib withdrew to Ninevah and was later assassinated.

All of us will experience crises. Even Hezekiah, the most godly king of Judah, faced peril and disaster for himself and his nation. We can learn much from his example. He showed by both words and actions that he trusted God to deliver him. Faith is not a safeguard from problems, but it is the answer.

Carraway is member of First Church, Wiggins.

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News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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# WCC grad student happy to serve country

By Jeanna Graves  
Correspondent

Annie Hart is a mother, a wife, and a student working on a master's degree in business administration at William Carey College (WCC) in Hattiesburg. She is also a soldier — a second lieutenant in the National Guard, Detachment 1, currently serving in Iraq.

"I thank God every day that I am an American," said Hart. "I pray that the hard work and the lost lives that Americans have sacrificed were not done in vain."

Hart, a native of Collins, is a detachment commander. "I am the maintenance control officer of the 367th maintenance company," said Hart. She manages seven different maintenance shops, including automotive, generators, air conditioning and refrigeration, communication and electronics, mobile maintenance teams, service and recovery, and certain armor kits.

Hart has served 14 years of military service — 13 enlisted with the Army and 18 months in the National Guard, including a three week long training camp in Germany. She plans to continue working for the Mississippi Army National Guard after returning home.

Life is busy for Hart even when she isn't serving her country thousands of miles away. She is married with two daughters: Nia, age seven, and Haley, age four. "When the war is over, I plan to take two months off and take my babies on vacation," said Hart. "I also want to return to school in the fall of 2005."

Hart plans to complete her master's degree. "I chose Carey



**FOOD FOR IRAQIS** — U.S. Army Sgt. Annie Hart (standing on Humvee, at right) of Collins and other unidentified American soldiers distribute candy to Iraqi children along with much-needed supplies for the people of Atrush in Iraq. Hart is a graduate student at Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg. (BR special photo)

for my education because it was small," said Hart. "I didn't want to be a number in a classroom. I wanted my college experience to be special and I found that at Carey, plus I love the trimester system."

WCC is a four-year liberal arts institution based in Hattiesburg, affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention and supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

"Annie is one of the leaders in class," said Jimmy McCay, assistant professor of business. "She not only earned her own degree, but helped four or five others from her unit do the same. She never missed classes and showed an unwavering dedication to her education."

"She prays a lot and her strong faith in God and country helps make her a good soldier. She also has lots of people praying for her," said Sandra Meeler, administrative assistant for the WCC school of business.

"Things that we take for granted are such a big deal to them. It fills my heart with joy to see a smile on the faces of the children of Iraq," Hart said.

When asked about her

favorite WCC teachers, Hart said, "All of the instructors in the school of business are my favorites, but the person I adore the most at WCC is Sandra Meeler. She always takes time to take care of anyone with whom she comes into contact. She's like a mom to me."

Graves is WCC administrative assistant for communications and public relations.

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